

# Skier Profile

## Mike Trujillo – Dedicated to the Winter Sports Clinic

It was twenty years ago that Vietnam veteran Mike Trujillo began his love of the slopes at the first National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. "I was there when it was just a small group of us," Trujillo said. "Now, it has become a world-class event that has helped and taught so many people the value of winter sports and staying active, despite their physical injuries." Trujillo was injured in a car accident some 16 years earlier while serving in the U.S. Army. A paraplegic, he had concentrated on raising his family and continuing to work as a steel detailer after his injury. He moved to California in the late 1970s, and was first introduced to wheelchair sports in 1981 and to the Clinic in 1987. He's been hooked ever since, and attends the event nearly every year.

It was at the Winter Sports Clinic that Trujillo learned to ski. Initially, it was a challenge because of his high-level injury. "In the beginning I wasn't on a mono-ski, not able to do as well as I had hoped," he said. "Today, I'm a much stronger skier and take those slopes head-on." He now incorporates family ski trips into his yearly vacation time. "I skied with my family twice last year. All the generations in the family try to make these trips. If I hadn't learned to ski at that very first Clinic, I wouldn't have these great family moments."

Despite his injury, Trujillo, who lives in Huntington Beach, has shown great strength as an athlete. He has participated in road racing and performed well in a number of marathons. He has competed at the national and international levels, attending events in Europe, Barbados, and Seoul, Korea, where he competed in the 1988 Paralympic Games. Trujillo's achievements were recognized in 1991 when he was named the Veterans of Foreign Wars Athlete of the Year. The year before, he was the National Veterans Wheelchair Games' "Spirit of the Games" award recipient, that event's highest honor.

It is said the Winter Sport Clinic is more than just a week of skiing; it's an event of physical and emotional rehabilitation. Trujillo attests to that. "Each year I go to the Clinic, I become a technically better skier," he said. "I also have seen yearly improvements in those who attend the Clinic year after year, and they truly are stronger because of this event. The emotional aspects of the Clinic are also amazing because there is such a sense of building friendships and camaraderie."

Mike Trujillo believes that training for the events and staying active in both winter and summer sports have kept him healthy and out of the hospital. "Competing is a great way to gage yourself, to see how you're doing and to stay fit. At the Winter Sports Clinic, you can do all three in an atmosphere of great camaraderie, just like a family."

